

Gregory Bishop

April 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

**RE: Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget**

President Glass and the Montgomery County Council Members,

My name is Greg Bishop, and I am a building services manager at Montgomery County Public Schools. In my many years of service keeping our schools safe, clean, and operating comfortably, I have seen the ups and downs of public budgets and how they affect our schools, our jobs, and our children. As a union member with SEIU Local 500, I am thankful for my brothers and sisters holding the line and negotiating for better working conditions. Unfortunately, one cannot get blood from a turnip. Reduction in public funding has resulted in depressed wages for public sector workers. With rising costs and inflation, this means our families' budgets afford less and less. A building service worker grade-6 cannot afford to live in this county which they serve. It is heart-breaking to lose good workers because of this. Many times, I have had a worker inform me they are quitting because they can make more at McDonald's or Wegman's. Low wages prevent us from retaining the talented folks we need to keep things operating smoothly. Too many of our public workers cannot afford the rising costs of living in Montgomery County. As this council debates everything from rent stabilization to budget needs, I would implore you to consider County Executive Marc Elrich's proposal to provide revenue enhancements to fully fund our school system. A slight increase in property taxes for some will mean the ability to stay in a home for many others. Our children, our school system, and its workers cannot be asked to bear the hardships of this county's budget constraints again. Too many of our families are already sacrificing so much. This is your opportunity to make it stop, to provide relief. I ask you for all public services in this county to be fully funded and for your support increasing revenues to support our public schools.

We urge you to pass the necessary property tax measures to ensure the full funding of Montgomery County Public Schools.

Gregory Bishop

MCPS Building Services